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AUTHOR Poulos, Angela
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ABSTRACT

Cooperative collection development is discussed as a method of coping with rising prices for expensive and little used library materials. The experiences of institutions which have had success in overcoming difficulties associated with cooperative ventures are presented, and a program of 12 recommendations is suggested. Twenty references are included. (Author/RAA)

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# COOPERATIVE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

by

Angela Poulos

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ABSTRACT

Cooperative collection development is being discussed as a method of coping with rising prices for expensive and little used materials in libraries. Although implementing a cooperative collection development plan is difficult, the experiences of institutions which have had success in developing cooperative agreements provide useful information in the planning of new cooperatives. Recommendations for establishing cooperative collection development have been suggested in this paper.

## COOPERATIVE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Cooperative resource sharing can include a wide variety of activities ranging from coordinated purchase and use of materials and equipment to shared services and personnel. One of the most tangible aspects of resource sharing is cooperative development and use of library collections. Networking and collection development are inextricably bound together in the future that is to be; therefore, principles of networking are applicable to cooperative collection development. Although cooperative collection development by large numbers of libraries is in the infant stages, numerous examples exist for examination. The increasing costs of acquiring materials are having an impact on current thinking about sharing library collections. Finally, the process of establishing cooperative collection development must begin.

Progress toward cooperative collection development has been slow, but a review of Barbara Markuson's chapter on networking in Hammer's The Information Age reminds readers that networking is of relatively recent origin.[1] While her remarks are directed to bibliographic networks, the principles outlined provide a sound basis for the formulation of cooperative collection development agreements. As is also the case with networking, documentation of progress in cooperative collection development is lagging considerably behind practice. Markuson urges librarians to take a critical look at what a network should do, how it will be accomplished, and the impact on local users.[2] The same questions should be directed at plans to develop collections cooperatively. Additional recommendations which apply equally to collections include:

1. Adequate definition of terms--Libraries developing directories of regional resources and strengths have found that definitions mutually arrived at are essential.

2. Realistic objectives
3. Careful planning
4. Establishing standards
5. Realistic analysis of costs
6. Education of all of the network's "publics"
7. Education and training of staff
8. Role of smaller libraries.[3]

Allen Sevigny outlines additional principles in creating a network which would also apply to cooperative collection development. He insists that a long-range plan of five years with annual revision is essential. To be convincing the cooperating units must present a unified front to those administrators or funding agencies from whom they will be seeking funds or other types of support. If cooperating units are uncertain of the value in cooperation, winning administrative support is impossible. Sevigny says a funding formula is necessary and should be written into any agreements which establish the entire cooperative system since dues and assessments are difficult to establish and collect each year.[4]

With these general principles in mind, a review of current and recent past practices will illustrate the state of the art. A paucity of information and research exists relating to successes, problems, evaluation and costs. Early reports discuss the virtues and necessities of sharing resources and present accounts of procedures established. The most frequently reported successes are the New York Metropolitan Reference and Research Library Agency (METRO), the Cleveland Area Metropolitan Library System (CAMLS), the Five Associated University Libraries of New York (FAUL), and the Library Council of Metropolitan Milwaukee.

At METRO the consortium took the position that resource sharing was an

enhancement of the collections rather than a loss of little used material. The members produced a directory of unique resources in the METRO area.[5] Early in the formation of the shared acquisitions program, the needs were studied, and recommendations were made to appoint a project director. The director's responsibilities included establishing procedures for cooperative acquisitions activities, seeking external funds for purchases, planning for centralized processing, and studying collections to identify specific subjects for enhancement.[6]

In 1971 each library contributed one-half of one percent of its materials budget to purchase items ranging in price from $50 to $2000, and these items were placed in libraries containing the strongest collection in the subject field. METRO received a $50,000 Higher Education Grant for Academic Libraries and was spending $19,000 by its fourth year. In the fifth year the consortium had eighty members. Since the special research interests of the larger libraries tended to leave smaller libraries with fewer purchases directed to their needs, the system was reorganized to permit smaller libraries to spend their contributions on items related to their needs.[7] The success of this consortium could be attributed to the degree of commitment of its members as evidenced by the establishment of guidelines, purchase policies, procedures, and depository agreements subscribed to by all participants in writing.

In 1975 a plan for a statewide network in New York with an administrative unit at the state level suggested a pattern for networking that may become the most commonly accepted model in the future. The network was to be divided by function such as resources, collection development, interlibrary loan, etc. However, the organization was very loosely structured, and participants could withdraw at any time. This approach was taken so that members would not feel they had lost autonomy.[8]

After the decision to cooperate in developing collections among network members has been made, the method for assessing what collection strengths exist must be decided. The original site appraisal for Area Resources Inventory described by Dorothy Sinclair in Hamilton and Ernst's Multitype Library Cooperation is difficult to carry out, but the CAMLS libraries have agreed to continue collecting in areas where they presently hold strong resources.[9] Six Site Appraisal for Area Resources Inventory (SAFARI) reports which describe these strengths and a report on the success of the SAFARI method have been prepared by CAMLS. Because of the time required to produce these reports, CAMLS has discontinued plans to publish them. Their experience shows that the reports were not used in the manner expected. CAMLS has two union lists of holdings and is planning to publish a directory of the subject strengths in the member libraries.

Susan Keller reports on the Library Council of Metropolitan Milwaukee and the success of cooperative collection planning between the University of Wisconsin, Marquette, and the Milwaukee Public Library. At monthly meetings acquisitions librarians review subject areas with other interested librarians and faculty in attendance. Keller summarized the benefits of this cooperation as:

1. Improved access to collections of three major institutions.
2. Sharing subject expertise with smaller libraries to assist in general collection development.
3. Access to special collections containing in-depth research resources.
4. Coordinated acquisitions and deselection.
5. Greater assurance of total coverage.
6. Relocation of materials to maximize usefulness.[10]

A newsletter informs participants of available resources. Analyses of collections in the arts have been completed, and philosophy and religion are under study. Involving faculty members has educated them to the valuable resources of the area and may have built an increased belief in the resource sharing concept. This work has been accomplished without a written agreement.[11]

In September 1970 the Wilden-Hart study of cooperative collection development for FAUL gave guidelines and recommendations for analyzing research collections and evaluated its acquisitions committee.[12] During the same year seven New England liberal arts colleges agreed to cooperate and made equal contributions of $6000 to support the operation of their consortium. Each participant was to prepare an acquisitions policy, and interlibrary loan was extended to all publics of the network. The director was to seek a storage facility and contract with larger libraries to use their collection. Teletype was installed in all member libraries, and all were to adopt the Library of Congress classification system. One college was to become the Research Center for Automation.[13]

In 1975 Jane Haas reported the success of a consortium of seven public libraries and thirty-one private libraries sharing resources via interlibrary loan. An important factor in this group was the preservation of anonymity of borrowers and lenders so that the special libraries of companies were able to continue their cooperative efforts. Sharing information with other librarians provided added growth and development to all of the professionals in the system.[14]

At Tri-College Library Consortia, composed of Concordia College, Moorhead State College, and North Dakota State University, the collections have been analyzed at each institution using the LC classes. Acquisitions librarians

meet monthly to discuss purchases over $50, and items listed in Choice. A data base of titles on order, received, ready to order, and those in backlog has been prepared, and all members have purchased terminals for an on-line catalog.[15]

In Ohio the State Library has assumed a leadership role in coordinating the activities of networks. This approach suggests that state level coordination is positive and will result in a better transition to national and regional systems.

The 1976 Association of State Library Agencies (ASLA) report listed the enabling legislation for the development of Area Library Service Organizations for public libraries in two or more counties and the provisions for metropolitan library systems in Ohio. No legal barriers exist which prohibit or limit participation and plans for state multitype library cooperatives.[16] Lack of prohibitions of this activity means that transfers of materials and exchanges can be very flexible. In the ensuing years with declining enrollments at colleges and with taxpayer revolts increasing, the task of convincing legislators that cooperative collection sharing is a positive benefit should not be difficult. Nor should the task of cajoling local auditors that transfer, exchange, or sale of library materials between institutions be so insurmountable.

The desire to cooperate clearly exists. A questionnaire surveying 138 libraries in the Ohio regional cooperatives in 1976 shows that collection development ranked as one of the three top priorities behind interlibrary loan and reference services. In two cases collection development ranked first.[17]

In Ohio a state-wide plan for multitype library cooperation, Library and Information Services for the Citizens in Ohio, has emerged in the form of regional, multitype library cooperation and information systems. This plan

will build on the existing regional strengths while insuring the local autonomy of each institution. If legislation is passed to create a single system of multitype libraries, the issue will be when do librarians begin to develop collections cooperatively rather than whether such activity should take place. The example of Illinois precedes this plan, and the most difficult barriers will be overcome with the passage of legislation for regional cooperatives. However, the difficult work of developing agreements to share collections can begin before libraries are mandated to do so.

The 1979 LSCA Title I and Title III grant proposals for the regional consortia in Ohio identified an interest in cooperative collection development, and various groups offered alternative plans in their proposals. Several have suggested using money to build library collections on existing strengths and sharing their collections with members. Others are considering the leasing of collections. Some libraries are discussing the sharing of data bases. A number have made attempts to evaluate the strengths of member libraries on an informal basis, and a few have tried a more systematic, formal approach. The methodology for the evaluation is extremely complex and will be costly for library staffs lacking personnel expressly employed to do collection development work.

Written agreements between libraries to collectively develop their book resources are critical to the long-term success of these efforts. Since collection cooperation is now in the developmental stages, a few libraries have prepared these agreements. In 1979 four consortia coordinators from Ohio, two of them from multitype library consortia, indicated that they had no written agreements. Two have established resource committees to select books or assess collections (Lorain and Medina counties [INFO] and the Greater Cincinnati Library Consortium [GCLC]), and the Ohio Valley Area Libraries (OVAL)

cooperative has a contract with the area's university library for interlibrary loan. Some of the most successful arrangements may be in the handling of serials with members of various consortia. Northeastern Ohio Major Academic Libraries (NEOMAL) is receiving cancellation information and hopes to achieve agreement on the part of libraries holding the last subscription.

A brief survey of the Ohio Inter-University Library Council (IULC) libraries also showed a lack of written agreements. Some members have discussed these possibilities, and others are trying to cooperate by consulting on costly reference and research items. A few plan to create directories identifying special holdings among members. Dayton-Miami Valley has a directory of data bases including items such as the G. K. Hall catalogs. CAMLS plans to publish a directory organized along the lines of that issued by the Illinois Regional Library Council which profiles the subject strengths of participating libraries and contains an index.

A final consideration in planning cooperative collection development is the economic logic behind such activity. It is doubtful that money will be saved in this area of rapidly declining purchasing power, and convincing other librarians, faculty, administrators, and legislators that this is the reason for sharing would be inappropriate. However, examination of costs involved with acquiring books which are seldom or never used can illustrate the need for cooperative development of collections.

Discovering the real costs of acquiring books was discussed in several papers presented at the 1976 Conference on Resource Sharing. In his presentation Allen Kent from the University of Pittsburgh stated that interlibrary loans represent less than one or two percent of all books circulated from a library daily, but vast amounts of money are spent on materials that may never be used. He cautioned librarians to develop a better understanding of use

patterns, or non-use patterns.[18] This activity is a first step and needs to be carried out very pragmatically in each library since all institutions have varieties in curriculum and programs.

At the same conference additional claims were made about costs. Jacob Cohen, Professor of Economics and Finance at the University of Pittsburgh, asserted that the acquisitions costs for a new book circulated may be as high at $124.29, and the total circulation cost at $139.93 per new acquisition. He suggested that the subsequent circulations of older titles was about $15.65 per circulation.[19]

Donald King of King Research, Inc., reviewed claims that place acquisitions costs in a range from $34.72 to $71.70. Using estimates for science books at the University of Pittsburgh, he placed acquisitions costs at $89.70 per book. He also stated the storage costs for a book at $.37 per year or $6.87 per 15 volumes. Finally, he claimed that the best cost benefit for purchase of a title was five to six uses of it, and eighty-four percent of the items purchased had seven or fewer uses. He estimated the cost of an interlibrary loan at $15.85, or $6.87 from the loaning library and $8.98 per copy for the borrowing library.[20]

In fact, librarians do not know what interlibrary loan and acquisition costs actually are in various sizes and types of libraries. Several years ago the State Library of Ohio set a transaction cost for interlibrary loan at $3.00 plus mailing charges and any other expenses incurred. Certainly, actual costs would be much higher. Studies are needed which provide consistency in what components have been included for costs. Results obtained would have value for comparisons between institutions.

The cost benefits of sharing book collections will be positive and will afford libraries the opportunity to develop collections in greater depth for

areas of importance to their clientele. Instead of developing homogenous collections, often in close geographic proximity, libraries will have a better opportunity to build collections of distinction where appropriate and improve access to a wider field of information to serve their users. By developing collections cooperatively, a greater depth of resources will be available regionally, and collections will become more valuable because of the unique characteristics that specialization will permit.

New patterns for providing materials may emerge. For example, King suggested that publishers may want to loan copies for a fee, in addition to selling them.[21] This practice would save academic libraries the long-term costs of multiple copies purchased for reserve and other temporary needs.

Better collections existing on a regional level will enable networks to respond to user needs more quickly within the geographic area. Alphonse Trezza, in discussing on-line networks at Pittsburgh, suggested that larger libraries may not receive a larger portion of requests once cooperation is under way. Systems soon learn that the smaller libraries may respond more rapidly. An informal survey from the Northwest Library District (NORWELD) in Ohio during 1978-79 indicated that a large number of items not available from Toledo-Lucas County Public Library would have been available in the smaller network libraries of the consortium. Another Ohio consortium library is filling fifty percent of the interlibrary loans within the resources of the consortium. With continued cooperation and coordination, the hit rate for these types of requests should improve. Trezza's claim that larger libraries will not be burdened will become a reality.[22]

Finally, some disagreement about cooperation appears in regard to how formal the arrangements must be. At Pittsburgh, John Aubrey of FAUL disagreed with Kent on the need for "clearly delineated acquisitions policies and

delegation to a centralized network authority as prerequisites to a successful program."[23] Aubrey said FAUL had tried and failed, concluding that these objectives may be impossible to achieve. Kent defended his statements on formal agreements saying that they were not rigid requirements, but he emphasized that, commitment lacking, the program could deteriorate. He felt that centralized authority had greater success in dealing with members.

Henry Shearouse, Denver Public Library, reiterated some of the same points at the insistence of his department heads. He outlined the following:

1. All agreements should be in writing and a part of each member library's policies.
2. Agreements must be approved at the highest administrative levels.
3. Staff who will carry out agreement provisions must be involved in the preparation of them.
4. Agreements must be monitored constantly and updated regularly.
5. Training of staff in the philosophy and techniques of resource sharing will be provided as a part of the agreement.[24]

Policies and procedures must be clear, but cooperative collection development should begin with the assumption that some risks will be assumed by all. In applying for funds, a program that is delivering some service has more appeal to funding agencies than one that exists only on paper.

Using some of the principles demonstrated by successful network activities and the experiences of those who are cooperating, the following program is suggested:

1. Identify institution desiring cooperative collection development. Focus on a reasonable geographic area, and commit personnel to begin planning.
2. Discover and share information on the needs of each institution.

Assess the findings utilizing a standardized format with definitions mutually agreed upon. Approval plan profiles can be very helpful in identifying needs and interests.

3. Formulate obtainable objectives and outline realistic expectations. Agree to cooperate and obtain support for that agreement at the highest administrative levels. Avoid an expensive bureaucracy.
4. Do site visits and share your findings with personnel involved.
5. Create a newsletter of modest proportions to keep members informed. Prepare a list of expensive resources and where they are located within the consortium.
6. Use existing bibliographic control methods before planning a new or separate system. Use of the telephone may be more effective and efficient than other expensive communication methods.
7. Investigate cooperative approval plans and other cooperative acquisitions projects. Use existing data bases to coordinate purchases.
8. Build staff commitment to cooperation by involving them in planning and inform them of services being received in addition to those that they provide.
9. Design an evaluation system to demonstrate how well the cooperation works, what it costs, and what benefits are provided. Create forms required to provide this documentation early because the types of records kept may be affected.
10. Share your experience with the library profession. Needs met at the outset of cooperation may change, but the experience of your consortium may be helpful to others in the planning stage.
11. Examine all possible sources for delivery service in your area.
12. Begin as soon as possible.

FOOTNOTES

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16. Association of State Library Agencies (ASLA), Interlibrary Cooperation Subcommittee, ASLA Report on Interlibrary Cooperation (Chicago: ASLA, 1976), p. 187.

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19. Jacob Cohen, "Book Cost and Book Use: The Economics of a University Library," in Kent, Resource Sharing, pp. 221-222.

20. Donald W. King, "Some Comments on Library Resource Sharing," in Kent, Resource Sharing, pp. 281-285.

21. King, "Some Comments," p. 286.

22. Alphonse F. Trezza, "Resource Sharing: Surmountable Problems," in Kent, Resource Sharing, p. 25.

23. "Resource Sharing Goals: Discussion," in Kent, Resource Sharing, p. 61.

24. Henry G. Shearouse, Jr., "Progress Toward Goals: Reaction," in Kent, Resource Sharing, p. 115.